view of the firewood and cow dung still being widely used as main fuel for cooking in rural areas and is there any plan to distribute improved chullah among the rural poor; and

(c) whether Government has discarded its campaign for popularizing 'Gobar gas' which once was a key component of rural development plan?

THE MINISTER OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (DR. FAROOQ ABDULLAH): (a) The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has implemented Demonstration project and National Programme on Improved Chullah (NPIC) during 1983-84 to 2002-03. During this period 35.2 million improved chullahs were installed. Various models and designs of improved chullahs approved for installation under the programme were having higher thermal efficiency and reduced emissions. As the improved chullahs installed during the period might have lived their life and as such may not be linked with rising emission.

(b) Design and development of newer models of improved chulhas have been taken up by some of the organizations, institutions and industries. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has constituted a Core Group and sanctioned a project to assess present status of various types of improved chulhas currently available, their suitability and delivery mechanisms. The implementation of improved chulha was transferred to State Governments in the year 2003-04. It forms a component of Indira Awas Yojana houses, being implemented by various State Governments in the country.

(c) No, Sir. Installation of 'Gobar gas'/biogas plants continue to be implemented under National Biogas and Manure Management Programme of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. It also forms part of the Twenty Point Programme of the Government. The programme has been revitalized by the Government through enhanced Central Financial Assistance and inclusion of innovative models of financing and implementation mechanisms. Installation of 6.47 lakh numbers of family type biogas plants are envisaged to be taken up during the Eleventh Plan period which is higher than the number of plants installed during the Tenth Plan.

Water quality of Ganga

1074. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:
SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ganga Action Plan has fulfilled its objective; if not, when would it be achieved;

(b) the expenditure incurred, so far;

(c) whether Bio-chemical oxygen demand indicators show that Ganga Water at Prayag and Varanasi is not fit for bathing;

(d) whether levels of Fecal Coliforms are reported to be exceeding maximum permissible limit, even at Haridwar;

(e) if so, whether it would not endanger health of pilgrims who come for a holy dip; and

(f) the Ganga has been declared 'National River' how would this honorofic help in Saving Ganga-Mata from decay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Ganga Action Plan (GAP) Phase-I was launched as a centrally funded scheme in 1985 with the objective of improving the water quality of the Ganga to acceptable standards. Various pollution abatement works like Interception and Diversion of sewage, setting up of sewage treatment plants, low cost sanitation works, crematoria works, etc. were taken up. GAP Phase-II which covered the tributaries of Ganga namely, Yamuna, Gomti, Damodar and Mahananda, besides Ganga, was approved in stages from 1993-1996. GAP Phase-II was merged with the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) in December, 1996. An expenditure of Rs. 837.40 crore has been incurred for river Ganga, and a sewage treatment capacity of 1025 million liters per day (mld) has been created so far under both the phases of the Plan.

(c) to (f) As per the designated-best-use criteria of Central Pollution Control Board for bathing quality, Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) values should be 3 mg/litre or less. Based on the independent monitoring undertaken by reputed institutions, the BOD values of river water quality at Allahabad (Prayag) and Varanasi has shown discernible improvement during the year 2008 (summer average) over the pre-GAP period (1986) as given below:—

Location	BOD (mg/litre)	
	(1986)	(2008)
Allahabad Downstream	15.5	3.2
Varanasi Downstream	10.6	3.0

The levels of Fecal Coliforms are reported to be exceeding the maximum permissible limit of 2500 MPN (Most Probable Number) per 100 milliliter at a number of monitoring stations along the river Ganga, other than Haridwar.

The Central Government has constituted the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 20th February, 2009 as an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority for conservation of the Ganga River. The Authority has both regulatory and developmental functions. Action has been initiated for preparation of a comprehensive Ganga river basin management plan which will form the basis for formulation of projects. The Central Government has allocated Rs. 250 crore in the budget of the year 2009-10 for NGRBA. States have been requested to prepare priority projects for critical pollution hotspots and major towns on Ganga and fast track the implementation of ongoing projects.

Conservation of rivers is an ongoing and collective effort of the Central and State Governments. River conservation activities such as creation of civic infrastructure for sewage management and disposal are also being implemented under other Central schemes, such as Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns, as well as under State schemes.

Danger to existence of Lakshadweep islands

1075. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the coral of Lakshadweep islands are dying causing danger to the existence of the islands as reported under a study; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the efforts made to arrest the problem to ensure sustainability of the islands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) According to a modeling study by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi; the reef building corals may not be dominant in Lakshadweep Seas after 2030-2040. The study has indicated that there is no evidence to state that the corals will totally die off and there is also no evidence that there is any danger to the existence of the islands. The study analysis was not based on field observations but on model and projection only.

The Ministry has identified four National Coral Reef Areas *viz*: (i) Gulf of Mannar, (ii) Gulf of Kutch, (iii) Lakshadweep and (iv) Andman and Nicobar Islands for their conservation and management. It provides financial assistance to the State/UT Forest Departments of all the four identified Coral Reef areas for implementation of approved Management Action Plans for conservation and management of corals and coral reefs. The Coastal Regulation Zone Notification (1991), as amended subsequently, recognizes the Corals and Coral Reef areas as ecologically sensitive and categorizes them as CRZ-I (i) and some species of corals are also included in the Schedules of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby according them high degree of protection.

Upgrading of Panna National Park in Madhya Pradesh

†1076. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Panna National Park in Madhya Pradesh is going to be upgraded to international standards;

(b) if so, whether several new animals would be brought in this park under this project;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.